

Washington, DC - Today, **Congressman Charlie Gonzalez (TX-20)** issued the following statement in the wake of President Barack Obama's address to a joint session of Congress.

"Tonight, President Obama came before Congress and the American people and gave us an honest assessment of the challenges we face. I commend him for that. I have always believed that if you tell the people, honestly and forthrightly, where we stand and what's going on, we as a people can meet any challenge and overcome any obstacle.

"And the challenges we face are many and severe. Fortunately, the Congress passed and President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act last week. This bill is not a silver bullet, and no one suggests that it will solve every problem nor do so overnight. But this is real life, not a fairy tale, and there are neither silver bullets nor perfect bills. This act represents, instead, a strong beginning and a down-payment on a better, stronger future. Millions of Americans will see the difference in their paychecks, beginning within the next few weeks. Just as importantly, much of the spending will leave federal hands very soon. Ensuring that the money is well spent and that we get the best return on our investment will require the cooperation of state and local leaders. We will depend on our governors and on our state legislatures to direct this funding to the best projects that will help the most people. The President has said that he will be watching to make certain that they do, but we must all watch, too.

"By meeting with the entire Congress, Republicans and Democrats, House and Senate, the President also made clear another point: we are all in this together, and it is only together that we can make it through. There has been a great deal of talk about bi-partisanship of late. No party has a monopoly on good ideas, and I hope that the Republicans will join with Democrats in Congress to craft the best legislation and policies for our country. We only have one President, however. By laying out to us all, clearly, the direction he hopes to take our country, President Obama is opening the door to that cooperation.

"There are difficult times ahead. Years of inaction, misguided action, and an over-reliance on a given set of principles in the face of evidence that a new direction was needed have lead us a long way down the wrong path. We have turned a corner, however. The American people recognized that the old way was the wrong way and they called for change. Tonight, President Obama laid out the direction he wants to go. I look forward to working with him and all of my colleagues to help get us there."

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